

Doubts Linger in JFK Death

From Press Dispatches

Doubt will not depart. It intrudes at the grave of President John F. Kennedy, killed by an assassin's bullet 12 years ago Saturday.

Still the questions from that sunny day in Dallas: How did

he die? Why did he die? Who pulled the trigger? Who killed JFK — really?

From the bumpers of cars to the halls of Congress, the questions are being asked.

Adding to the atmosphere of doubt, a senior member of the Warren Commission staff called Saturday for Congress to reopen the inquiry into Kennedy's death in the face of new questions posed by the findings on US involvement in foreign assassination plots.

David W. Belin, who served both the Warren Commission and the Rockefeller Commission on the Central Intelligence Agency, said he was

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confident that a new inquiry would not disturb the Warren Commission's conclusion that Lee Harvey Oswald, acting alone, killed Kennedy.

But Belin declined to rule out that a new inquiry might discover a conspiracy in the death of Kennedy.

"The Central Intelligence Agency, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Robert Kennedy in his capacity as attorney general of the United States failed to disclose to the Warren Commission evidence concerning plots to assassinate Cuban Premier Fidel Castro," Belin said. He said he found this inexcusable.

Belin also criticized the FBI for withholding from the Warren Commission a letter Oswald wrote shortly before the Kennedy assassination, threatening to blow up a Dallas police station.

The decision to ask for a new inquiry is a reversal for Belin, who has steadfastly taken the position that the Warren Commission's findings are valid. However, it was while serving on the Rockefeller Commission that Belin first learned of the extensive government plots to kill Castro.

These plots, and others against a number of foreign

leaders, were documented last week in an interim report by the Senate Intelligence Committee, probing illegal activities by the CIA and other US agencies.

The fact that the plotting against Castro was withheld from the Warren Commission has been the central factor in the growing suspicion against the Warren Commission conclusions.

Senators Richard Schweiker (R-Pa.) and Gary Hart (D-Colo.) are exploring whether the Senate Intelligence Committee should formally ask Congress to reopen the Kennedy case.

It has been theorized that Kennedy was killed as part of a conspiracy in retribution for the plots against Castro.

The doubt has been nurtured by the cynicism over Vietnam, Watergate and now the revelation of CIA misdeeds. Based on an October survey, the Harris Poll reported that 65% of the American people believe the assassination was "not the act of one individual, but rather of a larger conspiracy."

But some of the doubters have clamored since the Warren Commission — which included then Rep. Gerald R. Ford — made its report in 1964.

Michael Gee, office co-ordinator of the Assassination Information Bureau in Cambridge, Mass., says another reason for the doubt is the wide showing of Abraham Zapruder's color film showing Kennedy and Texas Gov. John Connally wounded in the motorcade. It shows the side of Kennedy's head being blown away and his head being thrown back.

The backward movement is dramatic proof for some critics that there must have been a gunman firing ahead of the motorcade, not only from Oswald's location to the rear.

Some of the controversial Warren Commission findings:

The shots came from the sixth floor of the Book Depository to the rear of Kennedy.

Three shots were fired. The first struck the back of Kennedy's neck and exited the front; it then struck Connally in the right back, exited, struck his right wrist and entered his thigh. The second was the fatal bullet in the head. The third shot went wild.

The three shots were fired

by Oswald.

There is no evidence that either Oswald or his killer, Jack Ruby, were part of any conspiracy, domestic or foreign, to assassinate Kennedy.

Various, critics contend that there were more than three shots, that some came from the grassy knoll or the freeway overpass and that one shot from ahead sent Kennedy's head back.

Contrary to the commission, they claim that a single bullet could not have followed a tortuous course wounding both Kennedy and Connally. They claim it could not have been recovered virtually intact.

These and numerous other interpretations lead critics to believe that Oswald either was not the assassin or that he was part of a conspiracy.

They have suggested that he was one of at least two gunmen, that he was a dupe, that he had a double and that he was deliberately assassinated by Ruby as part of a coverup.

The commission's defenders are no less emphatic in their denials of the doubters' allegations. They contend that ballistics evidence and Connally's own movement in the presidential car support the conclusion that one bullet could have struck both Kennedy and Connally. They note that the acoustics of a rifle shot are often misleading, and conclude that the people who thought they heard a shot fired from the front were mistaken.

On perhaps the most important contention of the doubters — that Kennedy's head jerked



—UPI Photo

THEY REMEMBER — On the 12th anniversary of the death of President John F. Kennedy, his brother, Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) watched Saturday as two of the Ken-

nedy clan's children placed flowers on the grave in Arlington National Cemetery. Standing next to the senator is Ethel Kennedy, widow of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy.

backward after the second shot that hit him, thereby indicating a shot from the front — the defenders have an explanation based on numerous ballistics tests that showed backward movement of human skulls after shots fired from the rear. They say the escape of brain material from the large exit wound propelled Kennedy's head backward after an initial movement forward.

Still, the doubters are not persuaded. The most current conspiracy theories involve the CIA, the Mafia, Cuban exiles, alone or in cabal, and Castro himself.

The Mafia, CIA and Cuban exile theories say the goal was to blame Castro for the assas-

sination and force a successful Cuban invasion to oust him.

Mafia plot theorists say the mob wanted to regain its valuable Cuban casino properties and its Havana drug connection, it was angered because Kennedy did not send in the Marines and redeem the 1961 Bay of Pigs fiasco; it feared possible rapprochement with Castro.

Debate Goes On

Some also say the CIA wanted to kill Kennedy because he was angered by many CIA clandestine operations and planned a review of covert activities.

So the debate goes on. Twelve years later, the said memories have faded, but not the questions.